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**USDA: Rice tops list of Arkansas commodity exports**

By Mary Hightower

U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast facts**

* Arkansas No. 1 in U.S. rice exports
* Ranks No. 5 in cotton, No. 11 in soybeans

(340 words)

(Newsrooms – with art at <https://flic.kr/p/2m8HLn5> )

JONESBORO, Ark. — Arkansas ranked No. 1 in the nation in rice exports, according to the State Agricultural Trade database released this week by the U.S. Agriculture Department.

The $722 million contribution by rice was part of the state’s total of $3.1 billion in agricultural exports, the report said.

Scott Stiles, extension economist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture said that of the $3.1 billion 78 percent, or $2.4 billion, was attributed to plant products.

The report covers the 2019 calendar year.

“In terms of dollar value, Arkansas ranks first in the U.S. in rice exports, fifth in cotton and 11th in soybeans,” he said.

According to the report, here are the commodities ranked by their respective contribution to the total export value:

* Rice — $722 million
* Soybeans — $679.3 million
* Cotton — $427.3 million
* Other feed grains: barley, oats, sorghum — $73.2 million
* Corn — $71.4 million.

Stiles said that “when grain prices were at record highs, the value of our crop exports alone was $3.2 billion back in 2012 and 2013. As commodity prices declined, we saw the dollar value of the state's crop exports steadily drop from 2014 to 2016.”

The trade war with China pulled the rug out from under those values.

“That pulled the value of crop exports down to $2.4 billion in 2018 and 2019,” Stiles said.

“As we look at the trends in export values, we have to think about the stories and events going on with our key trade partners,” he said. “China has long been the top export market for our soybeans and cotton. This year they are the top export market for our corn and other feed grains.”

Stiles said that although a state’s actual agricultural export value cannot be measured directly, USDA’s Economic Research Service estimates state exports of total and selected commodities based on U.S. farm cash receipts data. The Economic Research Service compiles data collected by the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Stiles said the next update will be in October.

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The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

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